

TEACHER ATTITUDES ON THE EFFECTS OF INCLUSION
ON STUDENTS WITHOUT DISABILITIES

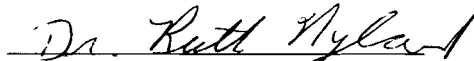
by

Jesse Riegert

A Research Paper
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the
Master of Science Degree
in

Guidance and Counseling

Approved: 2 Semester Credits


Dr. Ruth Nyland
Research Advisor

The Graduate School
University of Wisconsin-Stout

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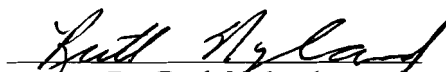
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ABSTRACT

There has been much debate about the effects of inclusion on students without disabilities since the passage of the Education of All Handicapped Children Act in 1975. The majority of research has found that inclusion has benefits for students with and without disabilities. The purpose of this study was to investigate and determine teacher attitudes regarding the effects of inclusion on students without disabilities in the areas of academic performance, behavior, and social relationships. A survey with 15 statements regarding inclusion was distributed to 122 elementary teachers in five different elementary schools in rural Wisconsin. Thirty-eight teachers participated in the study by completing the 15 statement survey. The survey used a 5-point Likert-type scale, with "Don't know" also listed as a response. Room for additional comments was also available for each statement.

The results of this study indicated that overall, teachers have neutral or positive attitudes regarding inclusion and the effects it has on general education students.

Teachers were particularly supportive of the social benefits inclusion has for all students.

After analysis of the data, the following recommendations were made. First, distribute a larger number of surveys in order to obtain more responses. Second, schools need to review the number of disruptions students create throughout the school day. Third, teachers should track their time in the classroom and determine the amount of time spent with general education students and students with IEP's. Fourth, teachers need to push more school involvement in gifted and talented programs. Fifth, future research should focus on specific disabilities and the effects of these disabilities in inclusive classrooms.

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Chapter I: Introduction

The passage of the Education of All Handicapped Children Act in 1975 increased the amount of debate about the effects that inclusion has on students without disabilities. This was the first Federal Law that required all children to receive a free and appropriate education (L. LaVenture, personal communication, February 2005). In 1990, amendments were made to this law and its name was changed to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). IDEA requires that students with disabilities spend more time in the general education classroom with their peers without disabilities and be educated in the least restrictive environment possible (Tate, 2000). If schools want to remove a student with disabilities from general education classes, they must prove that the student with disabilities is better off being segregated from their peers without disabilities (Baker, Wang, & Walberg, 1995).

Providing the necessary educational support for students with disabilities is difficult for many schools, especially rural school districts, which may not have the necessary resources to properly accommodate a child with disabilities. School districts are left trying to figure out how to meet the needs of these students and still be in accord with national laws on a limited budget with high student-to-staff ratios and inadequate staff training. If the needs of the students with disabilities are not met, lawsuits may follow by angry parents who believed their child was shortchanged.

On the other hand, some parents and students have the perception that students with disabilities included in the general classroom have a detrimental effect on students without disabilities. In a study by Peck, Staub, Gallucci, and Schwartz (2004) some parents voiced their concerns that inclusion had a negative impact on both the classroom

and their child. However, the research of some authors (Staub & Peck, 1995; Cook & Semmel, 1999) suggested that is not the case.

Much research has been done regarding the effects of inclusion on students without disabilities in the area of social relationships. According to Staub and Peck, (1995), one concern voiced is the worry that students without disabilities will learn undesirable behavior from their peers with disabilities, especially at younger ages. A survey by Peck, Carlson, and Helmstetter (cited in Staub & Peck, 1995) indicated that the teachers and parents of children without disabilities in early childhood classrooms felt that their children did not obtain any undesirable behavior from the students with disabilities. A similar study conducted by Staub, Schwartz, Gallucci, and Peck (1994) collected information on elementary and middle school students from parents and teachers, along with direct observational data, over two consecutive school years. Their data indicated that the students without disabilities did not obtain undesirable behavior from the students with disabilities in their study.

Staub and Peck (1995) pointed out that it is important not to draw any definite conclusions regarding this data and offer a couple cautionary statements. First, not enough studies on this subject have been conducted to draw any absolute decisions regarding this matter. Second, most studies of this nature have been conducted on younger children at the early childhood level, so similar studies need to be done in order to make generalizations to older age groups. Finally, most research has been descriptive in nature. Staub and Peck stated that this type of research is ambiguous and the results must be interpreted cautiously.

High student-to-staff ratios often get parents angered when they think of inclusion. They frequently worry that their child is not receiving adequate education from their teacher because a student with disabilities is receiving most of the teacher's attention. Few studies have been conducted on this issue, but one conducted by Hollowood, Salisbury, Rainforth, and Palombaro (1995) tracked the amount of engaged time teachers spent with students without disabilities in both inclusive and noninclusive classrooms. They found that teachers spent approximately the same amount of engaged time with students regardless of whether or not the class had a student with disabilities in it.

Contrary to the results of Hollowood et al. (1995), Peck et al. (2004) surveyed parents of children without disabilities who were students in inclusive classrooms. Many parents had concerns that their child's education was being hindered by disruptions created by students with disabilities. One parent even went on to say, "These boys' disability is unknown to me, but they have jeopardized the teacher's job and my daughter's fourth grade education" (cited in Peck et al., 2004, p. 140). This study also brought about the issue of social justice. Another parent stated, "This isn't working for the greatest number of kids. The parents of the child who needs to be included are asserting their needs over those of the many" (cited in Peck et al., 2004, p. 140). It appears that some parents feel it is unjust for students with disabilities to obtain more of the teacher's time.

Most opinions voiced regarding the effects of inclusion on students without disabilities have been positive. In the same study by Peck et al. (2004), most parents of students without disabilities felt their child had benefited by developing a greater

appreciation of the needs of others and developed a greater acceptance of people who appear and behave differently by having students with disabilities included in the classroom. A study by Sharpe and York (1994) found no decrease in academic or behavioral performance of students without disabilities in inclusive classroom settings.

In the area of social relationships, Cook and Semmel (1999) conducted a study to determine how students with disabilities are accepted by their peers in the general classroom setting. The results indicated that overall, students with mild and severe disabilities were less desired as work partners than their classmates without disabilities. Students with severe disabilities were also significantly less desired as play partners and everyday playmates compared to their classmates without disabilities.

Statement of the Problem

The documentation that exists on the effects of inclusion on students without disabilities has not provided a definitive answer regarding the outcomes of inclusion. The documentation that is there often has conflicting results or is limited by the sample size or its inability to be generalized to the greater population. Also, each sample used has unique qualities that cannot be quantified in a study. More research on this subject needs to be conducted in order to gather a large base of data so that all unique situations can be included in order to come to some conclusions about the effects of inclusion on students without disabilities. These students are often neglected in the inclusion process and their needs need to be determined and met as well.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the attitudes and beliefs of practicing school teachers working in grades K-5 throughout rural Western Wisconsin about the

effects of inclusion on students without disabilities in the domains of academic achievement, behavior, and social relationships using surveys during the Spring of 2006.

Objectives of the Study

This research will address the following objectives:

- 1) Determine the attitudes of teachers regarding the effects of inclusion on students without disabilities in the areas of academics, behavior, and social relationships.
- 2) Add to the growing collection of information on the effects of inclusion on students without disabilities.
- 3) Come to a conclusion or conclusions regarding the effects of inclusion on students without disabilities.

Definitions and Terms

For readers not familiar with the educational setting, these terms are frequently used in the special education realm.

- 1) Inclusion: involves keeping special education students in general education classrooms for some or all of their classes and bringing support services, if needed, to the child, rather than bringing the child to the support services (King, 2003).
- 2) Student with Disabilities: a student who is eligible for special education services. The following disabilities are eligible for special education services in Wisconsin: Autism, Cognitive Disability, Deaf-Blind, Deafness, Emotional Behavioral Disability, Hearing Impairment, Specific Learning Disability, Other Health Impairments, Orthopedic Impairments, Speech and Language, Traumatic

Brain Injury, or Vision Impairments may be eligible for special education services according to Wisconsin Law PI 11 (L. LaVenture, personal communication, February 2005).

3) Student without Disabilities: a student that is able to function normally in the classroom and does not have a documented cognitive, social, or physical impairment.

4) Individualized Education Plan (IEP): A specific plan developed for an individual student based on a needs assessment. Included within this individualized plan are objectives and criteria for evaluating achievement (Huefner, 2000).

5) Cognitive Disabilities: Students displaying significant delays in intelligence, adaptive functioning, and academic functioning that adversely affect a student's academic performance (Turnbull, Turnbull, Shank, & Shank, 2004).

6) Learning Disabilities: Students with difficulty organizing, remembering, and expressing information. This may be manifested in reading, writing, memory, interpersonal skills, and motivation (Turnbull, Turnbull, Shank, & Shank, 2004).

7) Emotional Behavioral Disorder: Students display age inappropriate social, emotional, or behavioral functioning that unfavorably affects the student's social relationships, personal adjustment, classroom progress, or work skills (Turnbull, Turnbull, Shank, & Shank, 2004).

8) Autism: A developmental disorder affecting primarily social interactions and communication as well as educational performance. This disorder is characterized by repetitive activities, stereotyped movements, difficulty adjusting

to change in the environment, or perseveration (Turnbull, Turnbull, Shank, & Shank, 2004).

Assumptions and Limitations of the Study

Due to the ethical nature involved in the teaching profession, it is assumed that the respondents will answer the survey truthfully and to the best of their ability.

- 1) It is assumed that all respondents will answer the survey truthfully and will not answer in a socially desirable manner.
- 2) Since the survey used in the study was created by the researcher, no reliability or validity data is available for the instrument.
- 3) The survey was distributed in Wisconsin elementary schools, therefore it is not possible to generalize the results to other areas of the World.

Methodology

This is a quantitative survey mailed to Wisconsin public education teachers employed in grades K-5. The survey contains 15 statements equally divided between the areas of academic performance, behavior, and social relationships.

Chapter II: Literature Review

Students without disabilities are required to deal with the effects of inclusion, good or bad, whether they want to or not, since it is required by Federal Law. The following literature review was conducted in order to determine what the literature has found to be the effects of inclusion on students without disabilities. The areas of academic performance, behavior, and social relationships will be examined.

Academic Performance

The first concern addressed deals with the issue of a possible decrease in academic performance of students without disabilities as a result of inclusion. According to Staub and Peck (1995), data from previous studies show that there is no decrease in academic achievement for children without disabilities enrolled in classrooms participating in inclusion. This holds true for studies involving children in preschool as well. Staub and Peck also examined a study by Bricker, Bruder, and Bailey that tracked preschool children without disabilities for over one year and found no proof of a decrease in academic progress. Surveys given to parents and teachers directly involved in inclusion reported attitudes of support for inclusion as well as the belief that no academic harm resulted to students without disabilities.

It should be noted however that Staub and Peck (1995) pointed out that there has been little research conducted regarding this matter and that their conclusions are drawn from a limited knowledge base of research. Staub and Peck felt that until more studies demonstrated similar results, no definite conclusion can be made regarding the academic effects of inclusion on students without disabilities.

A study conducted by Sharpe and York (1994) looked at performance levels of students without disabilities in inclusion classrooms. The study was conducted in a rural east-central Minnesota elementary school. The school decided to begin a pilot program during the 1989-90 academic year where five students identified as having moderate to severe disabilities would be educated in general education classrooms with special educational support. Sharpe and York used archival data, which included achievement test scores, report card grades, the Science Research Associates Assessment Survey, and reading level placement to determine academic performance before and after the inclusion pilot began. After analysis of the data, Sharp and York concluded that students with disabilities being educated in the general education classroom had no measurable effect on the performance of students without disabilities on academic measures.

A study by Odom, Deklyen, and Jenlcins (cited in Peltier, 1997) matched two groups of students without disabilities, one group in an inclusive classroom and the other group in a noninclusive classroom. Cognitive measures were taken and the results indicated no difference between the two groups. This study indicated that students without disabilities in inclusive settings performed on the same level academically as their peers in noninclusive classrooms.

Hunt, Staub, Alwell, and Goetz (1994) conducted a study in which three elementary-aged students with disabilities were included in cooperative learning groups. Students without disabilities were given assistance by their teachers in the groups on how to provide prompts and cues to the students with disabilities. This assistance was gradually removed and the students without disabilities helped the students with disabilities learn by providing the prompts and cues. There were three outcomes to this

study. First, the students with disabilities were able to independently conduct the communication and motor responses during the math activities as targeted by the researchers in the cooperative learning groups. Second, the students without disabilities continued to provide the prompts and cues without teacher involvement to the students with disabilities to help promote the learning of the students with disabilities. Third, the level of academic achievement of the students without disabilities was not negatively affected by the cooperative learning group facilitation.

Hunt et al. (1994) pointed out that it was important to acknowledge that the students without disabilities made significant gains in the mathematics unit, even though they had extra responsibilities. The results also showed that there were no significant differences in the academic achievement of students without disabilities between the cooperative learning groups that had and did not have students with disabilities. Hunt et al. also emphasized the advantages of cooperative learning groups, whether or not they contain a student with or without disabilities.

The results of the study by Hunt et al. (1994) indicated a positive step in identifying ways in which students with disabilities can be included in classroom activities where there is a beneficial outcome for them and no detrimental academic effect of the students without disabilities. Cooperative learning groups also can help teachers spend more time with all their students, rather than focusing on the needs of students with disabilities.

A study conducted by Cole, Waldron, and Majd (2004) found benefits to students without disabilities who were educated in inclusive classrooms. The study took place in six different Indiana school corporations using second to sixth grade students as subjects.

Students without disabilities educated in inclusive classrooms made significantly greater gains in the areas of math and reading than their classmates educated in traditional classroom settings over the course of the school year. Cole, Waldron, and Majd feel this is an important finding that helps support inclusive classrooms. However, the outcome of this study cannot be generalized since the results were generated in one area of one state using 1,035 subjects.

A study by Saint-Laurent et al. (1998) found that when general education students are placed in an inclusive classroom they improved their reading and mathematics scores. Students without disabilities scored higher in these two areas when they participated in the inclusion program compared to other students without disabilities that were taught in a traditional classroom setting without students with disabilities.

Social Relationships

Parents have a vested interest in inclusion and their opinions of inclusion can be heard all across the United States. In 2004, a preschool serving children with and without disabilities was required by law to accommodate 35 more students with disabilities in their classrooms (Jacobson, 2004). Due to facility constraints, the preschool informed the parents of the students without disabilities that they would have to find a different preschool for their children in order to make room for the arrival of the 35 students with disabilities. Parents were angered by this announcement. Parents of the children without disabilities voiced their concerns that opportunities for their children to be exposed to children with disabilities would be gone. They felt that their children would not have the exposure to children with disabilities and that this exposure would help their children grow and would help prevent them from forming prejudices.

Research has substantiated the opinions voiced by these parents. Staub and Peck (1995) found a number of positive effects of inclusion to students without disabilities. They concluded that the research indicated that students without disabilities benefited by being around other people who are different from them, increased tolerance of others, increased self-esteem, and improved relationships with students with disabilities.

Behavior

Staub and Peck (1995) also examined the question of students without disabilities learning undesirable behaviors from students with disabilities. According to Staub and Peck, research indicated that scientific observations and interviews with parents and teachers showed that students without disabilities rarely picked up unacceptable behavior from inclusion students. Staub and Peck warned against generalizations regarding these findings as well due to the limited research base used to make these conclusions.

Acceptance

The story is different regarding how students without disabilities accept students with disabilities as partners for school activities. A study conducted by Fredrickson and Furnham (1998) looked at the peer relationships of children aged eight to twelve who had and did not have disabilities. The results of the study indicated that it was more difficult for a student with disabilities to be accepted in a work situation compared to a play situation.

Ferguson (1999) conducted a study where she administered the Attitudes toward Inclusive Education Scale to general education 9th and 12th grade students. The school in which the scale was administered had mandated inclusive education for the previous six years. The results of the survey indicated that most of the students did not want students

with disabilities in the same classroom as them. Only one third of participants felt that general education students could obtain gains academically as a result of students with disabilities being in the same classroom. Despite these results, 61 percent of 9th graders and 57 percent of 12th grade students felt that general education students receive enough teacher time and attention in inclusive classrooms.

To examine the acceptance of children with disabilities by children without disabilities, Cook and Semmel (1999) conducted a study to determine how the students with disabilities were accepted by their peers in the general classroom setting. Classrooms were divided into heterogeneous and non-heterogeneous classrooms based on the proportion of classmates who were inclusion students, minorities, or students with reading performance one year below grade level. The results indicated that overall, students with mild and severe disabilities were less desired as work partners than their classmates without disabilities. Students with severe disabilities were also significantly less desired as play partners and everyday playmates compared to their classmates without disabilities. Cook and Semmel also found that students with severe disabilities were better accepted in non-heterogeneous classrooms compared to heterogeneous classrooms. Students with mild disabilities were better accepted in heterogeneous classrooms compared to non-heterogeneous classrooms except in the classification as a work partner.

Frederickson and Turner (2003) designed a study that attempted to elicit a greater amount of acceptance from general education students towards a student with disabilities. All the students were to meet once a week for six to ten weeks for about 30 to 40 minutes each meeting in a small group setting. At the initial meeting, the student with disabilities

was not present and a class discussion was held regarding that student's strengths and weaknesses. Out of the whole class, only six to eight students are selected to remain participants in the weekly meetings, which then included the student with disabilities. Each week the group rules are reviewed, along with the previous week's activities and goals. The children in this study ranged in age from four to eight years old. The results of the study indicated significant results regarding general education student's desire to play with students with disabilities. Compared to the control group, the intervention group gave higher ratings on how much they like to play with students with disabilities. Whether or not this rating actually correlated to more play between general education students and students with disabilities is unknown, but the fact that the general education students rated higher play ratings with students with disabilities is positive. Frederickson and Turner caution that some of the general education students not selected to be part of the small group conversations became jealous because they were not included in the activity. If possible, it may be more beneficial to separate the class into separate small groups and have more than one facilitator discussing the same topics in both groups.

In order to investigate the issue of time allocated by teachers, Hollowood et al. (1995) conducted a study that focused on students without disabilities losing time and attention to students with disabilities. Observers tracked the amount of time the teacher was engaged with students as well as the number and types of interruptions. The study found that teachers had the same amounts of engaged time with students without disabilities. Another result indicated there was no effect on losses of instructional time in an inclusion classroom compared to a control classroom.

Attitudes

In most studies there seems to be some a theme that successful inclusion is not something that can be easily implemented. After years of working in the general education classroom with both students with and without disabilities, Bricker (2000) found that the biggest barrier to obtaining the objectives of inclusion revolve around poorly trained staff members and not enough resources. Bricker believes there are three main points to successful implementation of inclusion which include attitudes, professional skills and knowledge, and support systems. It is important to note that Bricker affirms that all of these aspects are intertwined. One aspect alone will not be successful unless the other two parts are present.

Bricker (2000) states that the attitudes of all the parties involved play an important role in how the inclusion process works. Parents, teachers, students, administration, and the community all play a part in interactions with each other. Positive attitudes tend to lead to more successful inclusion outcomes. Staff needs to be informed and knowledgeable about the inclusion process and must have the necessary skills to work with students from a variety of backgrounds. Bricker also notes that the staff must also be able to work together and collaborate to be effective and knowledgeable. Bricker describes the support system as a broad construct ranging additional staff training to supportive administration.

A study by Taylor, Smiley, and Ramasamy (2003) found that special education teachers are more supportive of inclusion than general education teachers. They also found that general education teachers would prefer that the special education teacher teach students with disabilities in the general education classroom while they focused

primarily on the general education population. Both special education and general education teachers felt that students with severe disabilities should not be taught in the general education classroom, but did not indicate a reason for this preference. Taylor, Smiley, and Ramasamy also felt that for inclusion to work all the teachers involved need to support the concept or it will fail. It is also noted in the article by Taylor, Smiley, and Ramasamy that full inclusion does not necessarily correctly correspond to the least restrictive environment and that a full inclusion model creates a burden on the general education teacher to work with such a difficult population. This could lead to more time spent with students with disabilities and could take away attention for the general education population.

Downing, Eichinger, and Williams (1997) conducted structured interviews with 27 different educators regarding their attitudes towards inclusion. The interviewees included elementary school principals, grade K-6 general educators, and special education educators. The general education teachers were concerned that teaching students with disabilities in the general education classroom took additional time and energy and restricted the amount of time and effort they could put forward for students without disabilities.

Regardless of whether or not inclusion is beneficial for general education students, it is possible that students with more severe disabilities will be educated in the general education classroom (Cronis & Ellis, 2000). Cronis and Ellis ponder the idea that more infants are surviving due to improved neonatal care, but based on their experience, more children are being born with disabilities that are very difficult to manage. Since all children are entitled to a free and appropriate education (L. LaVenture, personal

communication, February 2005) and students with disabilities are required to spend more time in the general education classroom with their peers without disabilities and be educated in the least restrictive environment possible (Tate, 2000), more of these severely disabled students will be entering the classroom. Tate believes educators need to develop a deeper understanding of special education funding and any changes to funding that may affect the student population. Rural schools will also need to pay close attention to case law regarding special education and be careful in how they use the limited resources available to them in

Chapter III: Methodology

Introduction

In order to determine the attitudes of teachers employed in Wisconsin public schools regarding the effects of inclusion on general education students, a survey was created by the researcher. There is no reliability or validity data associated with this survey since it was created solely for the purpose of this study. This chapter will address the subject selection and description, instrumentation used, data collection procedures, data analysis, and will be concluded with the limitations of the methodology.

Subject Selection and Description

The subjects that participated of the survey were kindergarten through fifth grade teachers in five different elementary schools in two school districts in a rural area of Western Wisconsin. The Institutional Review Board of the University of Wisconsin-Stout granted approval of the study. Permission was also received from the principal at each elementary school prior to survey distribution.

Subjects were sent an email informing them that the survey would be distributed to them in their teacher mailboxes in the next week. 122 surveys were distributed. Demographic information was received from 37 (30.3%) participants while completed surveys were received from 38 (31.1%) participants.

Instrumentation

A survey was created by the researcher in order to determine the attitudes of rural grade K-5 Western Wisconsin public education teachers regarding the effects of inclusion on general education students in the areas of academic achievement, behavior, and social relationships. The survey consisted of 15 statements. The areas of academic

achievement, behavior, and social relationships each contained five statements. Each statement was to be answered using a five-point Likert-type scale, with “Don’t Know” also listed as a response. Room for additional comments was also provided for each statement. There is no reliability or validity data available for this instrument, since it was created by the researcher for the purposes of this study.

Data Collection

The surveys were delivered by hand to each teacher’s school mailbox in which the selected subjects were employed during the spring of 2006. Surveys were to be returned to a collection envelope located near the staff mailboxes at each school. Two weeks were allowed for the return of the surveys.

Data Analysis

The data was analyzed using appropriate descriptive statistics. The results of each statement were tabulated and reporting using tables. Comments from each statement were included in the tables for each statement, but no data analysis was completed on the comments.

Limitations

One limitation to this study is the lack of reliability and validity data for the survey used since it was designed by the researcher solely for the purposes of this study. Since completion of the survey is voluntary with no incentives, the number of returned surveys may be small. The return rate may not be high enough to yield significant results. The subjects that did complete the survey will need to answer the statements completely and truthfully in order to obtain any meaningful results. The survey is also

general in nature and does not focus on specific disabilities. This may limit the amount of meaningful data collected.

Chapter IV: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine the attitudes of elementary teachers regarding the effects of inclusion on general education students in the areas of academic achievement, behavior, and social relationships. This chapter will include the results of the survey, demographic information, and item analysis.

Demographic Information

The sample for this study consisted of 38 teachers. Participants ranged in age from 26 to 60 years old, with an average age of 44.8 years old. Three males and 34 females completed the survey. The level of teacher education varied from bachelor degrees to more than master's level training, with 12 teachers holding a bachelors degree, 11 with a master's degree, and 14 having earned more than a master's degree. The number of years teaching experience from participating teachers ranged from three to 35 years, with an average of 17.5 years teaching. The number of years teaching students with disabilities was slightly lower, ranging from one to 33 years experience with a mean of 14 years teaching students with disabilities.

Item Analysis

The survey consisted of 15 statements. Teachers were asked to rate each statement on a 5 point Likert scale with the option to mark "I don't know" and leave additional comments for each question.

Statement 1: General education students have higher grades as a result of having students with disabilities in the classroom.

Table 1

	Percent	n
Strongly Disagree	36.8	14
Disagree	26.3	10
Neutral	21.1	8
Agree	7.9	3
Strongly Agree	7.9	3
Don't Know	0	0

Comments:

- That makes no sense. How would a special education student increase a general education student's grades?
- This is not something to correlate.
- Only when the atmosphere is inclusive to learn.
- Should have no effect.
- I don't think this has a bearing on general education academic performance.

Statement 2: General education students have lower grades as a result of having students with disabilities in the classroom.

Table 2

	Percent	n
Strongly Disagree	26.3	10
Disagree	15.8	6
Neutral	39.5	15
Agree	13.2	5
Strongly Agree	2.6	1
Don't Know	2.6	1

Comments:

- Denies class progress on a whole at times.
- Since I spend more time with those children with IEP's in order to get their work done or have a calm, productive classroom, I would think the extra time spent with Gen. Ed students would result in more successes for them.
- It depends on individual students and on the severity of the disability.
- Lower grades occur when EBD students act out their EBD negative behaviors.
- Sometimes they do i.e.-cooperative learning-partner/group work.

Statement 3: General education students lose instruction time as a result of the teacher spending more time with students with IEP's.

Table 3

	Percent	n
Strongly Disagree	5.3	2
Disagree	10.5	4
Neutral	10.5	4
Agree	39.5	15
Strongly Agree	34.2	13
Don't Know	0	0

Comments:

- Because of help needed for the IEP student-the middle of the road student doesn't get the help.
- This is case specific. Some really require teacher time...Others equal out with regular ed. students.
- Only EBD students w/ poor behavior.
- Too much time explaining basics when we should be continuing w/higher levels of learning.
- It depends on the day. Yes sometimes the needs of special ed. students are greater. Students also lose instruction time if a regular ed. student is misbehaving and needs to be dealt with. This also depends if there is an aide in the room or not.

Statement 4: Your school puts as much time, money, and effort for gifted and talented students as students with IEP's.

Table 4

	Percent	n
Strongly Disagree	71.1	27
Disagree	26.3	10
Neutral	0	0
Agree	0	0
Strongly Agree	0	0
Don't Know	2.6	1

Comments:

- We have no gifted program!
- No way!
- There is almost zero dollars spent on gifted students.
- Gifted and talented get very little.
- I haven't seen the G/T teacher all year.
- Students w/IEP's have overtaken time and energy over all students.

Statement 5: It is distracting to the general education students when students with IEP's are removed for educational services during instructional time.

Table 5

	Percent	n
Strongly Disagree	23.7	9
Disagree	36.8	14
Neutral	15.8	6
Agree	15.8	6
Strongly Agree	2.6	1
Don't Know	5.3	2

Comments:

- It all depends on how it is handled.
- Students are removed now days for so many more reasons not just those w/IEP's.

Statement 6: Students with IEP's learn positive behavior from general education students.

Table 6

	Percent	n
Strongly Disagree	2.6	1
Disagree	10.5	4
Neutral	26.3	10
Agree	39.5	15
Strongly Agree	21.1	8
Don't Know	0	0

Comments:

- Goes both ways, positive + negative from both general + spec. ed. students.
- When taught in special education.
- They can learn both positive and negative behaviors.

Statement 7: General education students learn undesirable behavior from students with IEP's

Table 7

	Percent	n
Strongly Disagree	13.2	5
Disagree	31.6	12
Neutral	21.1	8
Agree	21.1	8
Strongly Agree	13.2	5
Don't Know	0	0

Comments:

- Goes both ways.
- LD and CD-not usually. Regarding ED students: I do believe Gen. Ed. students are observing and at times, joining in some of the inappropriate behaviors.
- Not all IEP's have behavior issues. Most gen. ed. students don't want to be like EBD students.
- Yes, from Emotionally Disturbed students but not from LD or CD.

Statement 8: The behavior of students with IEP's creates an unacceptable number of disruptions during instructional time.

Table 8

	Percent	n
Strongly Disagree	5.3	2
15.8	15.8	6
Neutral	15.8	6
Agree	44.7	17
Strongly Agree	18.4	7
Don't Know	0	0

Comments:

- At times.
- Depending on the disability and child...severe ED kids do disrupt.
- ED (not LD and CD) students interrupt many lessons.
- It depends on the IEP issues. ED or BD can and does cause disruptions.
- Each student with an IEP is different.
- ED and those in K that aren't labeled yet.
- Depends on students and disability.
- Some EBD students.
- This of course depends greatly on the student.
- When it is ED students and some CD.
- This year-yes! It depends on the student and the class.

Statement 9: General education students are disciplined more as a result of interactions with students with IEP's.

Table 9

	Percent	n
Strongly Disagree	13.2	5
Disagree	36.8	14
Neutral	18.4	7
Agree	21.1	8
Strongly Agree	5.3	2
Don't Know	5.3	2

Comments:

- Depends on the students.
- Kids are kids + especially when there is a very low functioning CD student in the classroom (as I had 3 yrs) sometimes others can't always treat them as peers.
- Many Gen Ed students are followers! Therefore they join in the inappropriate and dangerous behaviors of the ED student.
- Depends on student. I have one in my class-ED-who this is true for.

Statement 10: Students with IEP's are capable of having the same rules as general education students.

Table 10

	Percent	n
Strongly Disagree	5.4	2
Disagree	10.8	4
Neutral	18.9	7
Agree	56.8	21
Strongly Agree	8.1	3
Don't Know	0	0

Comments:

- But not always.
- However, they are often not held to the same standards expected of general ed. students.
- Normally so. The rules are the same but time lengths, consequences, and adaptations may need adjustments.
- Doesn't society expect that?
- LD and CD yes, ED students no! ED students need loving structure!
- Depends on what rules.
- Some ED students are not.
- They may need extra help or different consequences for following/not following the rules.
- Same rules, but different avenue to getting there!!
- Most are but not all.

- Some do-this depends on their disability and behaviors.
- Sometimes depends on students.
- Most of the time-LD yes-CD/ED depends on specific students.
- With reasonable modifications if needed.

Statement 11: General education students are friends with students with IEP's.

Table 11

	Percent	n
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Disagree	15.8	6
Neutral	15.8	6
Agree	52.6	20
Strongly Agree	13.2	5
Don't Know	2.6	1

Comments:

- I think they are, up until MS age, where they don't associate with them anymore (Different interests, etc.).
- I have not seen this very often, at all.
- More with CD and LD. I see very few ED students with friends (especially if they are very aggressive!).
- Again, it depends on the issues and behaviors.
- In K yes!
- They may be friendly towards them, but don't seek them out as friends.

Statement 12: General education students are positive role models for students with IEP's.

Table 12

	Percent	n
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Disagree	2.7	1
Neutral	16.2	6
Agree	70.3	26
Strongly Agree	10.8	4
Don't Know	0	0

Comments:

- They may be a positive role model, but I'm not sure that the IEP student sees that.
- Depending on the child.
- Not always!
- The Gen Ed student population is becoming more needy.
- Sometimes.
- Many are-some are not.

Statement 13: General education students “make fun of” or “pick on” students with IEP’s.

Table 13

	Percent	n
Strongly Disagree	13.5	5
Disagree	35.1	13
Neutral	29.7	11
Agree	21.6	8
Strongly Agree	0	0
Don't Know	0	0

Comments:

- They both start to see differences in each other.
- It's a constant battle for the most part.
- Depends on behaviors.
- Not in my level.
- 5 yr olds = very empathetic and accepting.
- Sometimes-depends on the student.
- Some do, some don't.
- Sometimes.
- Not usually-depends on student's behavior.
- Sometimes-once again its individual specific.
- Usually in the lower grades K, 1st.

Statement 14: General education students are more accepting of students with IEP's as a result of interactions in the classroom.

Table 14

	Percent	n
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Disagree	7.9	3
Neutral	23.7	9
Agree	50.0	19
Strongly Agree	18.4	7
Don't Know	0	0

Comments:

- Not always and depends on grade levels.
- Up to a certain age!
- LD and CD yes. ED students are not well accepted.
- Especially CD students.
- Hopefully.

Statement 15: General education students benefit socially from their interactions with students with IEP's.

Table 15

	Percent	n
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Disagree	7.9	3
Neutral	28.9	11
Agree	42.1	16
Strongly Agree	18.4	7
Don't Know	2.6	1

Comments:

- LD and CD yes. ED students no!
- It is not a Lake Wobegon society (not everyone is above average) Tolerance is a life skill.
- Learn tolerance-acceptance of all others.

Chapter V: Discussion

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine the attitudes of elementary teachers regarding the effects of inclusion on general education students in the areas of academic achievement, behavior, and social relationships. This chapter will discuss the results of the study and conclude with recommendations for further studies regarding the effects of inclusion on general education students.

Discussion

As required by law, students with disabilities are required to be educated in the least restrictive environment possible (Tate, 2000). Educators must be effective and efficient in their modes of instruction in order to meet the needs of every student in the classroom. Teacher attitudes are a disposition that can either facilitate or hamper educational effectiveness. The majority of literature reviewed found inclusion to be beneficial and positive for general education students and students with disabilities alike. The results of this study are similar, with some exceptions.

Studies by Staub and Peck (1995), Sharpe and York (1994), and Odom, Deklyen, and Jenlcins (cited in Peltier, 1997), discussed the issue of academic performance of general education students in inclusive classrooms. Statements one and two in this study addressed the same issue. In statement one, "General education students have higher grades as a result of having students with disabilities in the classroom," 63.1% of respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement. Comments on this issue included "I don't think this has a bearing on general education academic performance" and "Only when the atmosphere is inclusive to learn" indicate that teachers

do not feel that general education students obtain higher grades in inclusive classrooms. 42.1% of respondents also disagreed or strongly disagreed with statement two, “General education students have lower grades as a result of having students with disabilities in the classroom. 39.5 of respondents were neutral regarding this statement. Some comments reflected specific times when general education students grades are lower, such as when EBD students act out or when placed in cooperative learning/partner group work. Although more people disagreed than agreed with statement two, some teachers do feel that general education students have lower grades as a result of having students with disabilities in the classroom. This appears case specific and most likely differs year to year based on the type of disability general education students are exposed to in the classroom. Students with emotional behavioral disorder often act out or have outburst during instructional time and is most likely more disruptive than a student with a learning disability.

An issue often brought to the forefront is related to general education students loosing teacher time and attention to students with disabilities. Hollowood et al. (1995) found that teachers spend the same amount of time with both general education students and students with disabilities. The results of teacher attitudes in this study differed. In response to statement three, “General education students lose instruction time as a result of the teacher spending more time with students with IEP’s,” 73.7% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed. One teacher commented, “Too much time explaining the basics when we should be continuing with higher levels of learning.” This is a difficult response to substantiate, however, since this survey is measuring attitudes and not

tracking teacher time. Regardless, teachers feel that students with disabilities are taking time away from general education students.

Statement four stated, “Your school puts as much time, money, and effort for gifted and talented students as students with IEP’s.” 71.1% of respondents strongly disagreed and another 26.3% of respondents disagreed with this statement. No participants responded neutral, agree, or strongly agree, with one respondent answering don’t know. The attitudes of teachers regarding this issue are very conclusive.

Comments included, “We have no gifted program,” “There is almost zero dollars spent on gifted students,” “I haven’t seen the gifted and talented teacher all year,” and “Students with IEP’s have overtaken time and energy over all students.” Based on these results, it appears schools put little to no time into their gifted and talented programs. Schools may have so many needs for their special education students that all their time and money is invested into students with disabilities and there are no resources left over. They may also overlook gifted and talented children because their needs are not as pervasive as the needs of students with disabilities.

Teachers do feel that when students with IEP’s are removed from the classroom, they do not create a disruption. 60.8% of respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed with statement five, “It is distracting to the general education students when students with IEP’s are removed for educational services during instructional time.” One teacher noted, “Students are removed now days for so many more reasons, not just those with IEP’s.” Students are removed for a number of reasons in today’s schools. Students often called visit with the principal, guidance counselor, secretary, Title I teacher, speech and language specialist, or gifted and talented programs. It is likely general education

students consider other students being removed from class the norm and it does not affect them because it occurs so frequently it appears to be part of the normal school day for them.

Statements six and seven addressed general education students learning both negative behavior from students with IEP's and students with IEP's learning positive behavior from general education students. Studies by Peck et al. (cited in Staub & Peck, 1995) and Staub et al. (1994) determined that general education students do learn undesirable behavior from students with disabilities. The results from statement seven, "General education students learn undesirable behavior from students with IEP's," indicated that 44.8% of respondents disagreed with that statement while 34.3% agreed. Although most teachers believe that general education students do not pick up unacceptable behavior, a large percentage believe general education students learn some undesirable behavior from students with IEP's. The majority of participants (60.6%) agreed with statement six, "Students with IEP's learn positive behavior from general education students." It appears that general education students have the opportunity to be influential in a positive regard in inclusive classroom settings and are taking advantage of that opportunity.

Statement eight, "The behavior of students with IEP's creates an unacceptable number of disruptions during instructional time," received a large number of agreement responses. 63.1% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. Most comments mentioned individual differences in students with IEP's making the most difference in the frequency and severity of disruptions. Many teachers specifically noted that students with Emotional Behavioral Disabilities cause the majority of disruptions.

50% of respondents disagreed with statement 9, “General education students are disciplined more as a result of interactions with students with IEP’s” Only 26.3% agreed with that statement. One teacher commented, “Many general education students are followers! Therefore they join in the inappropriate and dangerous behaviors of the ED student.”

Statement ten declared, “Students with IEP’s are capable of the same rules as general education students. 64.9% of teacher felt that students with IEP’s could have the same rules as all other students. This statement also elicited the greatest number of teacher comments in the study. These comments included, “Normally so. The rules are the same but time lengths, consequences, and adaptations may need adjustments,” “Some ED students are not,” “Same rules, but different avenue to getting there,” “Most are but not all,” and “However, they are often not held to the same standards expected of general education students.”

An area of concern involves the level of acceptance of students with disabilities by general education students. A study by Cook and Semmel (1999) found that students with disabilities were less desired as work partners by general education students. Ferguson (1999) found that high school students did not want students with disabilities in the same classroom. Fredrickson and Furnham (1998) found students with disabilities are less likely to be accepted in work situations compared to play situations. Although statement 11, “General education students are friends with students with IEP’s,” and statement 13, “General education students ‘make fun of’ or ‘pick on’ students with IEP’s” did not specifically address acceptance, they addressed the issue of how teachers perceive the social worth of students with IEP’s. 65.8% of respondents either agreed or

strongly agreed with statement 11 and 48.6% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with statement 13. 29.7% of responses were neutral regarding statement 13. These results indicate that teachers feel that students with IEP's are accepted within inclusive programs. General education students in the school's surveyed have overcome prejudice and are willing and able to develop friendships with students with disabilities. This is a positive finding and supports inclusive settings to help students learn tolerance and develop friendships.

Statement 12 stated, "General education students are positive role models for students with IEP's." 81.1% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. It appears that general education students take the time to be positive influences in the lives of students with IEP's. These types of positive interaction at this age will set the stage for more beneficial interactions later in life. Statement 14 read, "General education students are more accepting of students with IEP's as a result of interactions in the classroom." 68.4% of teachers either agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. Exposure to different types of people with disabilities helps students learn and understand they students with disabilities are very similar to themselves and teaches tolerance. A study by Staub and Peck (1995) had a similar finding. In their study they found that students without disabilities benefited from being around other people who are different from them, increased tolerance of others, and improved relationships with students with disabilities.

Statement 15, "General education students benefit socially from their interactions with students with IEP's," attempted to cover the broad topic of social relationships between general education students and students with IEP's. 60.5% of respondents either

agreed or strongly agreed with this statement citing comments such as, “It is not a Lake Wobegon society (not everyone is above average). Tolerance is a life skill,” and “Learn tolerance-acceptance of all others.” Teachers feel that general education students can benefit socially from being in an inclusive classroom. They learn to interact in different ways with people that may not be able to communicate as well. This teaches great communication and social skills and is yet another positive finding for support of inclusive classrooms.

Conclusions

The majority of teachers expressed positive attitudes regarding inclusive classrooms. Most of the statements were rated in a positive regard. Teachers felt that general education students do not have lower grades, are not distracted when students with IEP’s are removed from the classroom, do not learn undesirable behavior, do not get in more trouble, make friends with students with IEP’s, are positive role models, do not pick on students with IEP’s, accept students with IEP’s, and benefit socially as a result of being in inclusive classrooms.

Negative attitudes were present regarding some statements. Teachers overwhelmingly felt that their school does not put as much time or money into gifted and talented programs compared to programs for students with IEP’s. Teachers also felt that general education students lose instructional time and deal with disruptions during instructional time as a result of being in inclusive classrooms.

Recommendations

After reviewing the results of the survey, the researcher has developed the following recommendations:

- 1) Distribute a larger number of surveys in order to obtain more responses. The number of returned surveys was small. More responses would increase the likelihood that this study could be generalized to more schools. It would also be beneficial to distribute the survey to schools in different regions of the United States. Having a more diverse sample for this study would also increase the likelihood that this study could be generalized to more schools.
- 2) Schools need to review the number of disruptions students create throughout the school day. Both general education students and students with IEP's should be included in this review.
- 3) Teachers should track their time in the classroom and determine the amount of time spent with general education students and students with IEP's. This should be reviewed periodically to ensure that both general education students and students with IEP's are receiving an acceptable amount of instruction time.
- 4) Teachers need to push more school involvement in gifted and talented programs. A study is needed to determine if the results of low involvement in gifted in talented programs was isolated to this study or if this is result can be generalized to other schools. It would be important to determine the amount of money and time spent with gifted and talented students compared to general and special educations students.
- 5) Future research should focus on specific disabilities and the effects of certain disabilities in inclusive classrooms. These disabilities include cognitive disabilities, learning disabilities, emotional behavioral disorder, and autism.

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Appendix A: Implied Consent Form

Consent to Participate in UW-Stout Approved Research

Title: Teacher Attitudes on the Effects of Inclusion on General Education Students in the Areas of Academic Achievement, Behavior, and Social Relationships

Investigator:

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Description:

Research will be conducted using a survey consisting of 15, five-point, likert-type questions. The content of the questions will address the attitudes and beliefs of elementary school teachers regarding the effects of inclusion on general education students.

Risks and Benefits:

Risks - The survey will take time away from teacher preparation time.

Benefits - The information collected will help contribute to the growing collection of information on the effects of inclusion on general education students.

- Teachers will have an opportunity to anonymously voice their opinion about their beliefs on how inclusion affects their classroom.
- The information generated by the survey may impact the direction of inclusion in the future.

Time Commitment and Payment:

Completion of the survey will typically take between five and ten minutes.

Confidentiality:

Your name will not be included on any documents. We do not believe that you can be identified from any of this information. All sealed surveys from each participating school will be collected and combined before the envelopes are opened and the surveys are examined.

Right to Withdraw:

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You may choose not to participate without any adverse consequences to you. However, should you choose to participate and later wish to withdraw from the study, there is no way to identify your anonymous document after it has been turned into the investigator.

IRB Approval:

This study has been reviewed and approved by The University of Wisconsin-Stout's Institutional Review Board (IRB). The IRB has determined that this study meets the ethical obligations required by federal law and University policies. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study please contact the Investigator or Advisor. If you have any questions, concerns, or reports regarding your rights as a research subject, please contact the IRB Administrator.

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Statement of Consent:

By completing the following survey you agree to participate in the project entitled, Teacher Attitudes on the Effects of Inclusion on General Education Students in the Areas of Academic Achievement, Behavior, and Social Relationships

Appendix B: Survey

Dear Respondent,

I am inviting you to participate in a research project to study the effects of inclusion on general education students. Along with this letter is a consent to participate form and a short survey that asks a variety of questions about inclusion. I am asking you to complete the survey and demographic cover letter and return both in the envelopes provided to the packet marked "Inclusion Survey" in the teacher's lounge. Please be sure to keep this demographic page and the survey separate to ensure anonymity. There are two envelopes provided to ensure confidentiality. This survey should take you about five to ten minutes to complete.

The results of this survey will be included in my thesis. Through your participation I hope to understand more about the effects of inclusion on general education students. I hope that the results will be useful in adding to the growing data on inclusion. The results of this survey will be available in the University of Wisconsin-Stout thesis catalog upon the completion of my thesis.

If you have any questions or concerns about completing the survey or about being in this study, you may contact me by email at riegertj@uwstout.edu. This project has been approved by the Institutional Review Board at The University of Wisconsin-Stout.

Sincerely,

Jesse Riegert

Demographic Information

1. Age: _____
2. Gender: (Please Circle) Male Female
3. Degree: (Please Circle) Bachelors Masters More than Masters
4. Number of Years Teaching _____
5. Number of Years Teaching Students with Disabilities _____

Inclusion Survey

Directions: Please circle the response that best corresponds to your belief about each question. If you have any additional comments, feel free to add them in the comment section. Once completed, seal this survey in the envelope provided and return the sealed survey to the large envelope entitled, "Inclusion Survey," located in the teacher's lounge.

Please complete survey by Monday, April 10th.

1. General education students have higher grades as a result of having students with disabilities in the classroom.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	
1	2	3	4	5	Don't Know

Comments:

2. General education students have lower grades as a result of having students with disabilities in the classroom.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	
1	2	3	4	5	Don't Know

Comments:

3. General education students lose instruction time as a result of the teacher spending more time with students with disabilities.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	
1	2	3	4	5	Don't Know

Comments:

4. Your school puts as much time, money, and effort for gifted and talented students as students with disabilities.

Strongly				Strongly	
Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Agree	
1	2	3	4	5	Don't Know

Comments:

5. It is distracting to the general education students when students with disabilities are removed for educational services during instructional time.

Strongly				Strongly	
Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Agree	
1	2	3	4	5	Don't Know

Comments:

6. Students with disabilities learn positive behavior from general education students.

Strongly				Strongly	
Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Agree	
1	2	3	4	5	Don't Know

Comments:

7. General education students learn undesirable behavior from general education students.

Strongly				Strongly	
Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Agree	
1	2	3	4	5	Don't Know

Comments:

8. The behavior of students with disabilities creates an unacceptable number of disruptions during instructional time.

Strongly					Strongly	
Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Agree		
1	2	3	4	5		Don't Know

Comments:

9. General education students are disciplined more as a result of interactions with students with disabilities.

Strongly					Strongly	
Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Agree		
1	2	3	4	5		Don't Know

Comments:

10. Students with disabilities are capable of having the same rules as general education students.

Strongly					Strongly	
Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Agree		
1	2	3	4	5		Don't Know

Comments:

11. General education students are friends with students with disabilities.

Strongly					Strongly	
Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Agree		
1	2	3	4	5		Don't Know

Comments:

12. General education students are positive role models for students with disabilities.

Strongly				Strongly	
Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Agree	
1	2	3	4	5	Don't Know

Comments:

13. General education students "make fun of" or "pick on" students with disabilities.

Strongly				Strongly	
Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Agree	
1	2	3	4	5	Don't Know

Comments:

14. General education students are more accepting of students with disabilities as a result of interactions in the classroom.

Strongly				Strongly	
Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Agree	
1	2	3	4	5	Don't Know

Comments:

15. General education students benefit socially from their interactions with students with disabilities.

Strongly				Strongly	
Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Agree	
1	2	3	4	5	Don't Know

Comments:

Thank you for completing this survey. The results will be used to provide data for my thesis regarding the effects of inclusion on general education students.